

# The Telegraph Wire

ISSUE 10



FREE



by  
Dave  
Stevens  
© 1982.

# WIT TO BE TIED

EDITORIAL BY  
DIANA SCHUTZ

With many thanks to the indomitable Al Gordon for this star-spanning logo, the following harangue is brought to you courtesy of the Shanghai Noodle Factory where ye editor is, quite seriously, tied up in knots.

Be forewarned: it's rampage time! I normally don't go in for frothing at the mouth, but I've been insulted once too often and I'm not gonna take it anymore. Listen well, kiddies, for today's sermon is about a subject near and dear to ye editor's heart: namely, women in comics.

Let me tell you what prompted this current fit of outrage. One Friday evening not too long ago, I settled in for the night with my nice, crisp batch of the week's new comics. Among the stack was a copy of KA-ZAR #28, which I got to in due time--my mistake. Now, KA-ZAR is a direct sales title and, by definition, is intended for a more specialized, more sophisticated audience rather than the general market of the newsstand. Or so retailers have been led to believe. (Aren't we the gullible lot?) In any case, the issue in question opens with a scene of Shanna ignoring her longtime jungle boyfriend, seemingly oblivious to the comments he directs her way. In the meantime, she is suffering a *crise de conscience*, wondering why it was that when she thought she saw Ka-Zar die a few issues previous, she completely flipped out, lost her marbles, fell to pieces. Surely she's stronger than that, she thinks. Surely she's not so dependent on this man that she couldn't survive without him.

Cut to some kind of aerial tennis game which Shanna uses as a verbal battleground, flinging taunts and insults at Ka-Zar with a rapid-fire tongue. And these two are supposed to be in love? Give me a break.

Through some stupid and vindictive move on Shanna's part which I thankfully no longer remember, the two "lovers" fall from their winged transports to what appears, of course, to be certain death. Until, that is, Ka-Zar manages to snag onto some sort of outcropping with one hand, conveniently catching Shanna with the other. While quite literally hanging on the brink of death, in a situation

which would terrify most people into panic-stricken silence, these two continue their verbal volleyball until Ka-Zar says something Shanna finds particularly abusive and she lets him have it. No, not a punch to the gut or a knee to the groin, as might befit an angry fighter, but a traditional response instead: she slaps his face. The result: Ka-Zar loses his grip and they plummet to earth once again, landing unceremoniously, but miraculously unscathed, on their asses.

Okay, so Shanna's been through some rough times lately--she has, after all, just recently survived the terrors of New York City--and she has a right to be a bit cranky. But this character who, under the skillful pen of writer Bruce Jones, was once a convincing woman with a well-developed personality has now degenerated into nothing more than a first-class bitch at the hands of her current writer, with a paper-thin if not entirely hackneyed set of motivations. To make matters worse, in the course of the story she discovers the wedding ring Ka-Zar meant to give her, and after spouting all this "Me, not we" stuff *ad nauseam*, she turns to total mush complete with cooing and ooh-ing at the sight of the magic ring. I mean, c'mon! I find it thoroughly insulting that I, as reader, am expected to swallow this outrageous lump of horsepoop--not to mention having paid 75¢ for it as well!

Of course I couldn't sleep that night. I tossed and turned in bed, fuming at my pillows, imagining intricate tortures for all the so-called "creative" personnel connected with this book that had upset me so. Finally, I determined I would never rest until I wrote to Danny Fingerth, the book's editor, and told him just exactly what a piece of trash it was. So, at 3 a.m., I hauled out the trusty old IBM and exorcised my frustrations on paper. Another LoC that

will never see print. But at least I did finally get some sleep that night.

This is, unfortunately, not an isolated incident--otherwise perhaps my hackles wouldn't have been raised quite so high. But it was the last straw. I'm really tired and fed up with this male-dominated industry catering to puerile tastes and foisting adolescent boys' fantasies on me. Comic book publishers are quick to lay out raps on how the industry has grown up, come of age, or whatever other platitudes spring easily to mind. But what have we got? Countless pages of long-underwear musclebound maniacs duking it out with the nearest bad guy, and perfectly-formed, amply-endowed heroines who emerge from battle with their make-up intact and nary a hair out of place. The same old boring garbage, that's what we've got.

Look at the ad copy for Pacific Comics' new series, SOMERSET HOLMES: "Alone. Vulnerable. Terrified." Yet another Female Victim, who initially appears in a low-cut blouse and slit skirt and manages to pare down to bra and panties within the first half of issue #1. Can this really be the product of a respected writer like Bruce Jones and female editor April Campbell?

While well-developed characterization and strong emotional drama are in general lacking in comics, they are virtually nonexistent as regards women in comics. Four-colour heroines, for the most part, can be neatly divided into two distinct categories, both extremes, and both shallow: first, there is the Sue Storm prototype ("uh, excuse me, that's Mrs. Reed Richards"), the classic shy, dependent, and subservient female; at the other extreme is the macho-type heroine who, with raised fist, could just as well be a man but for a pair of large breasts and a body more appropriately suited to *Playboy* centerfolds than to crimefighting activities. Virtually all female superheroes are secondary derivations from male counterparts. They all have a stunning figure and wear skin-tight, sexy costumes. They are all young, middle-class, and well-educated. Just once I'd like to see a fat old bag lady be the one to get bitten by a radioactive spider!

There are exceptions, of course. Los Brothers Hernandez's LOVE AND ROCKETS is a brilliant demonstration of the potential of women in comics--without being a feminist tract. Its solid, flesh-and-blood females may indeed be sexy, but complex and intriguing characters nonetheless. LOVE AND ROCKETS is alternative fare, however, and of a decidedly different orientation than that of mainstream comics.

But what about the mainstream? Is it the impossible dream to hope for real women in our four-colour comics? To ask for at least a small understanding of women and some insight into the female perspective? What is the problem with the vast majority of mainstream (predominantly male) writers? Are they all really Panboys in disguise now working in the Big Leagues? Are they all cases of arrested psychosexual development that they feel compelled to pander to juvenile attitudes towards women?

And what about the people who publish this tripe? Perhaps comic book publishers

are concerned with satisfying the needs of their market which, despite their fine rhetoric regarding growth and maturity, they still define as an agglomeration of adolescent males. And even if the market were primarily on the underside of 20 and of the male persuasion, shouldn't these same publishers be wondering what happened to the female comic market of three or four decades ago? Isn't it conceivable that women have been driven away from comics by precisely the lack both of convincing female characters and of books targeted to women instead of to little boys?

The mass market comic book industry, though largely male-dominated, is not entirely devoid of women. Editors in the field include Louise Jones, Mary Jo Duffy, and Karen Berger; Jan Duursema, Marie Severin, and now Mary Wilshire are all mainstream artists; and there are many female letterers, colourists, and assistant editors. Wendy Pini turned fandom on its collective (pointed) ear with ELQUEST. Cat Ironwode, in addition to being associate editor of Kitchen Sink's SPIRIT as well as editor of Eclipse's new AZTEC ACE, is probably the best critical writer and reviewer in the field. Furthermore, the industry can finally boast of women in *business* positions, what with Carol Kalish and Lea Sapp at Marvel, and DC's new sales rep, Corinda Carford. Not to mention Jenette Kahn, President and Publisher of DC Comics. And there are others, though female comic book writers are noticeably few and far between. Still, despite the best efforts of the mainstream to keep itself an exclusively male domain, this growing emergence of a female work-force in the industry can only indicate a similar trend in the marketplace. Certainly it is reflected at the retail level with more and more women working in comic shops throughout the country.

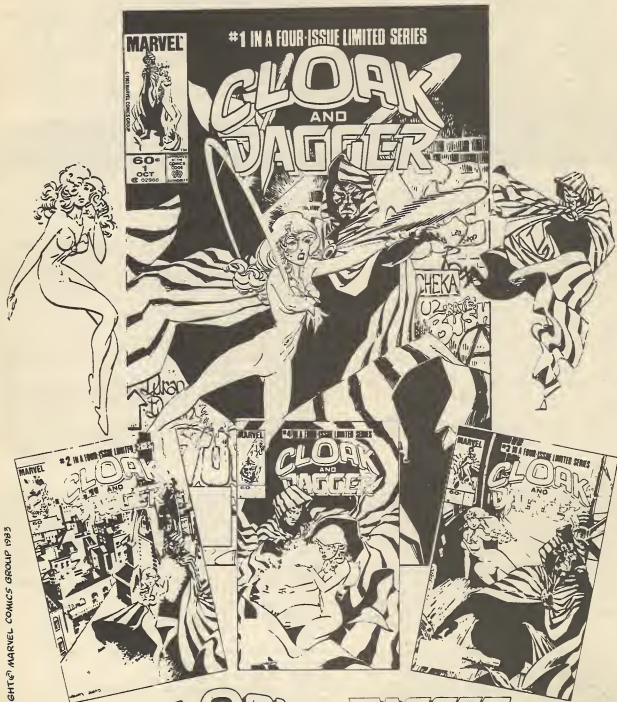
So, fine: a small particle of light at the end of a very long, very black tunnel. But what are these women actively doing to pursue the dormant female audience? The independents among them, and notably Cat Ironwode, are far from afraid of publicly voicing their opinions on the subject. Those employed by the mainstream, however, are hamstrung by their companies' traditional and regressive attitudes. Corinda Carford is, mind you, involved in a DC task force designed to examine the female issue. Well, great--but I'll believe the results when I see them.

The point is this: There will be no substantial female audience until the women already involved in the industry begin exerting some hard-core pressure on their male bosses to produce more books aimed at cultivating such an audience. The Big Bosses will continue to refuse to produce such books until they are shown that a female audience already exists. A vicious circle? You bet. Let's break out of it now! Write letters, ask penetrating questions at conventions, scream loudly until you are heard! It's our only hope--for women, for men who aren't afraid of women, and for the healthy growth of this industry.

End of sermon.

# NEW FROM MARVEL® COMICS

THE LIMITED SERIES YOU DEMANDED!



COPYRIGHT © MARVEL COMICS GROUP 1993

## CLOAK AND DAGGER™

COLLECT ALL *FOUR* ISSUES! YOU'LL BE GLAD YOU DID!



# ECCENTRIC EVOLUTIONS

by JOHN BARRETT  
PUBLISHER

## IN SEARCH OF MIDDLE-AMERICA

As, hopefully, you know by now, COMICS & COMIX has just opened its seventh store, in the Solano Mall in Fairfield. A rapidly growing community, Fairfield strategically lies between Berkeley and Sacramento, and also services the Napa and Vallejo areas.

More times than I can count (on two hands at least), I've been asked, "Why open in such an area?" The answer is complex-- and not primarily because I live in nearby Dixon! COMICS & COMIX recognizes that, for the continued health of our industry, the retail branch must reach out to expand the audience.

Before the advent of the direct market, comics were a dying form. To support the explosion of new companies and new product, the comic-buying customer base must keep pace; otherwise, the new-found prosperity will be a short-lived phenomenon. In the United States, with a population of approximately 250 million, 100 to 150 comic titles are published each month (with top circulation being in the neighborhood of 600,000 copies). By comparison, Japan sells up to two million copies per month per issue of its 100-150 titles, and has a population of just 100 million! And the European statistics



are comparable to Japan's. Obviously, the U.S. has tremendous room for growth in the business of comics!

This brings us back to the original question: "Why Fairfield?" Rather than go for the "gas station" effect (a station on each corner of every intersection), we chose to boldly go where no man, er...comic store, has gone before! Opening up in a mall presented us with the opportunity to reach a new crowd. People who previously thought comics were no longer being made (and we hear that statement almost hourly!) are now being exposed to the fine talent available in this truly American art form. With some luck and a lot of hard work, we hope to enlarge the existing market and ensure the continued growth and prosperity of the comics field. And we urge other comic entrepreneurs to follow in our footsteps.

Finally, I invite you to share your enthusiasm and knowledge with your friends and relatives. Introduce them to the fine art, stories, and investment potential of the medium. The larger the buying audience, the better and more diverse the comic-related material will become--helping you, in turn, to find more of what you like.

Let's keep it healthy!



# MAIN LINES

## AARDVARK-VANAHEIM

Players of Dave Sim's *Diamondback* card game will be pleased to learn that Dave has invented an entirely new card game. Entitled *Priestess*, the game will be premiered in a future issue of *CEREBUS*.

Speaking of the *CEREBUS* will be centered around the earth-pig's decision to follow the pattern of all deposed public officials and write his memoirs.

## CAPITAL PUBLICATIONS

The publishers of *NEXUS* are planning to continue their heavy marketing of this off-beat superhero character by releasing two more *Nexus*-related items: a *Nexus* button and a *Nexus* poster. Both of these will retail for \$1.50 apiece and be illustrated by *NEXUS* artist Steve Rude.

Capital's two new titles, *BADGER* and *WHISPER*, are both well underway. *BADGER* #1, by Mike Baron and Jeff Butler, will ship in late July, while *WHISPER* #1, by Steven Grant and Rich Larson, should be released later this year.



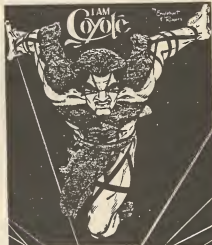
The cast of  
*WHISPER* by  
Grant and Larson

## COMICO

Beginning with the fourth issues of *SLAUGHTERMAN*, *AZ*, *SKROG*, and *GRENDEL*. *Comico* will be publishing its entire line with the exception of *PRIMER* in full colour. According to these new publishers, the purpose of the change is to "put *Comico* in the comics limelight."

## ECLIPSE ENTERPRISES

Late September should see the release of *I AM COYOTE* #1, the first in a three-issue Baxter series reprinting the origin



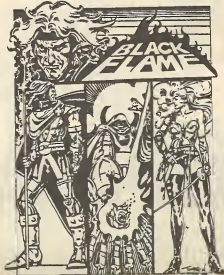
(C) Englehart and Rogers

of *Coyote* which originally appeared in black and white in *ECLIPSE MAGAZINE*. The mini-series will be prepared in full, painted colour, and separated by the laser-scan process. Rumour has it that certain explicit scenes from *Coyote*'s original run may be toned down for the colour comic, given its potentially wider audience.

## FIRST COMICS

The bad news: Frank Brunner will be leaving *WARP* after issue #9, the concluding chapter of the current storyline. The good news: Jerry Bingham, former *Marvel* penciller, will be taking over the title in Brunner's stead. Writer Peter Gillis and inker Mike Gustovich will remain on the book.

And as if that weren't enough excitement for one title, *WARP* #10 will also feature the premiere of Peter Gillis' and Bill Willingham's *Outrider*: a back-up that will frequently interweave with the lead story.



TW & (C) First Comics, Inc.

**WE'RE MOVING AHEAD...  
AT WARP SPEED!**

WARP graphics  
**ELFOQUEST**

by Wendy & Richard Pini



**THE MYTH-ADVENTURES  
OF AAHZ & SKEEVE**



by Robert Asprin  
& Phil Foglio

(COMING SPRING 1984)



by Colleen Doran & Richard Pini

(COMING NOVEMBER 1983)

**FLY WITH US!**

**AVAILABLE AT DIRECT-SALE SHOPS EVERYWHERE**

Produced by  
WARP GRAPHICS, 2 Reno Road, Poughkeepsie NY 12603

Finally, still more work for Peter Gillis: a new book entitled **THE BLACK FLAME**, which will be illustrated by Tom Sutton. According to First, "The series is designed to be a vital fusion of supernatural adventure and human interest, combining elements of horror, psychology, detective fiction, motorcycling, high fantasy, and knockout superhero action," not to mention "a profound skepticism on the part of both creators as to what constitutes reality and what does not." An ambitious project, to say the least, but not inconsistent with First's already high standards.

#### GRAPHITTI DESIGNS

Graphitti, the company that produces the *Rocketeer*, *Ms. Tree*, *Steve Canyon*, and *Spirit* t-shirts, has now added four more shirts to its selection: *Groo* by Sergio Aragones, *Neil the Horse* by Arn Saba, *Cerebus* by Dave Sim, and an original drawing of a rather buxom female by John Byrne. This new line will soon be available at COMICS & COMIX, and the shirts will retail for \$8.95 apiece.

#### KITCHEN SINK PRESS

Publisher Denis Kitchen has announced a drastic change in Kitchen Sink's policy of reprinting Will Eisner's *Spirit* sections.

To begin this revamping process, Kitchen has cancelled **WILL EISNER'S SPIRIT MAGAZINE** with issue #41, due out in July.

Now calm down out there! You--yes, you!--put down that razor blade! Will Eisner's material will be reprinted in two new magazines, one of which will be a colour Baxter comic entitled **THE SPIRIT**. **THE SPIRIT** will reprint four post-war *Spirit* episodes in each bi-monthly issue, beginning with the very first story and proceeding in chronological order. The colour will be, in Kitchen's words, "a combination of full-process colour, flat colour and gray tones unlike that used in any other comic book." The first issue of **THE SPIRIT**



Marionette  
from X/MICROS #2

(C) Marvel Comics Group



(C) Will Eisner

is scheduled for release in October.

Kitchen's other new publication will be **WILL EISNER'S QUARTERLY**, a black and white magazine with a colour insert. **WILL EISNER'S QUARTERLY** will showcase Eisner's new work and his interviews with other respected cartoonists, as well as reprinting the pre-war *Spirit* sections in chronological order. It will debut in November.

#### MARVEL COMICS

*Special Claremont Edition*: Face front, true believers! Cheerful Chris Claremont is on the move!

The X-MEN writer is currently collaborating with penciller Bret Blevins on a story featuring former X-Man, the Angel, slated for an upcoming issue of **MARVEL FANFARE**.

Claremont has also teamed up again with British artist John Bolton to produce another two-part "Marsda" story for **EPIC MAGAZINE**. Furthermore, these two creators have begun work on **THE BLACK DRAGON**, scheduled to appear later this year as a six-issue series in Marvel's successful Epic line of comics.

But that's not all. Claremont fans! The first issue of the X-MEN/MICRONAUTS mini-series, written by Claremont and Bill Mantlo, and beautifully pencilled by Butch Guice, is due to appear in late September. A must-have for all team boosters!

And now, in totally unrelated news, all the Marvel editors will be on hand at this year's San Diego Comic Convention, August 4-7. Books appearing that month are completely at the mercy of Marvel's assistant editorial staff and promise to be full of surprises! **MARVEL TAILS #1**, starring "Peter Porker, the Spectacular Spider-Ham", is due to be released just about that time, and if it's any indication of things to come, Marvel fans are in for a very weird month of August. 'Nuff said.



Characters (C) Arn Saba

One of Graphitti's new t-shirts





(C) Warren Publishing

#### PACIFIC COMICS

Pacific has scheduled three new titles for release in August, the first of which is Jim Starlin's **DARKLON**, a 48-page colour reprint on Baxter stock of the stories originally published by Warren in black and white.

The second title is **VANGUARD**, an admirable effort by Pacific to introduce the very best in new talent as well as established favourites. For example, a new writer might have his script illustrated by a top pro, or vice versa. Planned as a bi-monthly book on regular stock, the first issue of **VANGUARD** will feature collaborations between David Campiti and Tom Yeates, as well as Mike Baron and Steve Rude, along with a solo effort by Brendon McCarthy.

Finally, there is **SILVER HEELS**, drawn by Scott Hampton and written by Bruce Jones (who must go through several typewriters per year!). A 32-page comic printed on high-quality Hudson cover stock and utilizing full process colour, **SILVER HEELS** is the story of an Indian living in the distant future.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 With apologies for hiding away the indicia on these later pages, but that's just the way it worked out, folks. **THE TELEGRAPH WIRE** #10, July/August 1983. Published bi-monthly by Comics and Comix, Inc., 2461 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley, California, 94704. Copyright (C) 1983 individual contributors. All rights reserved. Subscriptions: \$4./six issues. Publisher: John Barrett. Starry-eyed Editor: Diana Schutz. Editorial News Assistant: Matthew Denn. Cover Logo: Tom Orzechowski. Cover Illustration: Dave Stevens, colour courtesy of Pacific Comics. All information contained herein is accurate to the best of our knowledge. With special thanks, this issue, to the sweet Long Island singer for the spectacular view from Cloud 9. Lovely to see you again my friend.  
 \*\*\*\*\*

# Card Sharks™

65  
 COLOR  
 + B+W  
 GREETING  
 CARDS



AVAILABLE  
 AT ALL

**COMICS  
 & COMIX**

STORES

DEALERS:  
 WRITE  
 FOR  
 WHOLESALE  
 CATALOG:

CARD SHARK PRODUCTIONS  
 2221 DWIGHT WAY #2  
 BERKELEY, CA 94704



(C) Dave Stevens

# The ROCKETEER!

by Dave Stevens

## ROCKETING TO FAME

### an interview with Dave Stevens

Few artists have taken the comics world by storm quite like Dave Stevens. With the first appearance of *The Rocketeer* as a back-up feature in *Pacific Comics' STARSAYER #2*, this hitherto virtually unknown writer/artist became an overnight sensation. With fandom clamoring for more of Stevens' work, *Pacific* was pleased to acquiesce, continuing *The Rocketeer* through *STARSAYER #3* and then vaulting the character into *PACIFIC PRESENTS* as the lead feature. Public recognition of Stevens' considerable talent culminated at the 1982 San Diego Comic Convention, where Dave was presented with the newly-instated Russ Manning Memorial Award for most promising new artist--an extra-special tribute, as Dave first started out in the comics field as Russ Manning's assistant.

Though suddenly catapulted into the limelight, Dave is sincerely puzzled by the instant acclaim and, in fact, a little shy about it all. A determined perfectionist, he puts an overwhelming amount of energy into his work, sparing no quarter. This, of course, is evidenced by the painstaking quality of his art--a lucky boon to fandom-at-large.

On a visit to the Bay Area last March to do several signings for *COMICS & CONIX*, Dave kindly consented to give one of his rare interviews--sandwiched, late one night, between an Italian dinner and midnight sun-dae! Many thanks to Dave for his time and effort spent on the interview and to *Pacific Comics* for donating the *Rocketeer* cover to this issue of the *Wire*.

*This interview was conducted by yours truly, faithfully transcribed by my number one assistant, Matthew Denn; copy-edited by Dave Stevens, with final edits by --*

-- Diana Schutz

DIANA: How did you get involved in this crazy business in the first place? I understand that you did some work prior to your stuff for *Pacific*.

DAVE: Not much. I started working as Russ Manning's assistant on *Tarzan*--that was my first comic work, and that was on the Sunday page. I worked for him for about a year, and did some European *Tarzan* books with other people. I never actually wrote or drew one all by myself: I either inked or pencilled, to where I was just one of many hands on the stories. After that, I took time off and I went back to San Diego and did some painting and general goofing off, and then moved to L.A. and did that *Aurora*--and that was the only time that I ever ventured into it completely by myself and tried to write it and draw it and everything.

DIANA: You did *Aurora* for Sanrio Films, right?

DAVE: Yep, and at the time they were trying to put together a magazine that would rival *HEAVY METAL*, because *HEAVY METAL* had just then come out--a year before, in '76--so they thought they wanted to do that, but

only in Japan. -They wanted to get together a bunch of west coast artists or "American" artists, and then put them all together in a big book and market it in Japan only for Japanese audiences, to where it would be Japanese-type subject matter also in the stories--a lot of the characters were female heroes rather than men, which I thought was real interesting. They seemed to be gearing it to a female audience.

DIANA: Is that the same *Aurora* that's coming out in ALIEN WORLDS? (Laughter) Are you allowed to say that?

DAVE: Oh yeah, of course! The thing is that (Sanrio) bought it outright when I did it, and then the magazine never came out. They bought all this material from all these artists and stockpiled it, and apparently changed their minds about the publication about a year after they put it all together, so it never actually saw print--none of that stuff did. So I wrote them and maintained contact, and then three years later, they gave me back the rights so that if I ever did decide to do anything with her (which I wasn't really going to), I could without getting into any trouble. So I ended up owning it again, but I wasn't going to reprint it at all because it was old and so ugly--to me--to look at. I just kind of hid it away in my bottom drawer, then one day Bruce was up--

DIANA: Bruce Jones?

DAVE: Yeah; he and April (Campbell) were up visiting for the week-end. And I showed it to him--we were digging through old artwork and stuff--and he thought he might want to use it. He called me about a week after that and said he was in a real bind: two people had flaked out on him on the second issue of ALIEN, and he had only eight pages filled in that issue and he was really up against it deadline-wise and wanted to know if he could use it, right away. So that's why it's in there. I did the cover, kind of to spice it up a little--to make it look like there was something good about it, had Bruce re-script it--but, for the most part it's really old, ugly stuff. And the new colouring certainly didn't do anything to help it either.

DIANA: Well, but then you said at dinner that you're picky and you look back on your stuff and it just doesn't--

DAVE: It lies there. It moans. (Laughter) "Oh, bury me!"

DIANA: Well, comic fandom doesn't agree with you, Dave.

DAVE: Well, they haven't seen this yet. (Laughter) Wait 'til they see this! They're going to be screaming all the way home, "What's he trying to pull!?"

DIANA: Okay, just to backtrack a little, how did *The Rocketeer* come about? How did you get involved in working with Pacific on the strip?

DAVE: They came to me at a convention in '81 and said that they were starting up a comic line; they had a book by Mike Grell

that had six pages empty in the back, and they wanted to know if I could fill two of the issues.

DIANA: You knew Steve and Bill Schanes prior to this?

DAVE: Yes, because when I was living in San Diego for a while I knew them then, when they were in the comic dealing business-- they had a couple of bookstores. So I said "Sure." It sounded like an easy thing to do: just two issues, and it didn't have to be a continuing feature--just one story in two parts. So I went home and thought about it over a month or so, and then the time came to do something, and I thought "Uh oh, I'd better get to it," so I did a full-page drawing, and just threw everything in it--I didn't know what I was going to write. And that was the back cover to that first one (in *STARSLAYER* #2), with him standing there, very posed, with all the characters running around his legs. And I wrote it around that scene, using all those elements. After I handed them that page for the ad, I still didn't know what I was going to do, and that is really the way I still work: I write a page at a time--which is completely ridiculous. I should have a plot already mapped out ahead of me and continuity to kingdom come and then just draw away, but I can't. I have to milk it a day at a time, because for some reason I'm not able to...since I don't write, I'm not able to pull it all out at once and get a complete story from beginning to end. I get bits of it every now and then, but it has to percolate, and so I'll go through it and do page 18, and come back and do page two, and then at the end hope that it all comes together and makes sense. I've been lucky, so far, knock wood. (He taps his noggin.)

DIANA: What prompted the time period, late '30s?

DAVE: Just a personal taste. I've always loved that look--"streamlined modern", bullet-shaped stuff, and art deco forms, the styles of clothing, the airplanes, cars, and everything. It's just the most visually appealing part of this century that I can think of--it's something that I've always enjoyed. I love old music and old clothes and all that stuff, so why not? I certainly don't like high-tech, and I would never ever do a strip with machinery and STAR WARS type stuff. It's just each. Too cold-looking. Lifeless.

DIANA: Didn't you do some STAR WARS, though, for Marvel?

DAVE: As a matter of fact, I did. When they were first doing their adaptation from the movie in '76, I helped a couple of guys do one issue. I think I inked three pages or something like that, and then I ghosted about four weeks of the dailies in between Manning and Alcalá, with another guy, and also ghosted two pages of the *JEDI* adaptation for Al Williamson--and that was it for STAR WARS. I actually was in the running for the strip at one time: I did a couple of sample Sunday pages. But I'm glad that didn't work, because my interpretation and

# THE FIRST TEAM

## TITLES

AMERICAN FLAGG  
E-MAN  
MARS  
JON SABLE  
FREELANCE  
STARSLAYER  
WARP

## WRITERS

Mike W. Barr  
Howard Chaykin  
Peter Gillis  
Mike Grell  
Jack C. Harris  
Marc Hempel  
Paul Kupperberg  
John Ostrander  
Martin Pasko  
Mark Wheatley

## LETTERERS

Ken Bruzenak  
Janice Chiang  
Peter Iro  
Bruce Patterson  
Bill Spicer  
John Workman

## ARTISTS

Frank Brunner  
Rick Burchett  
Howard Chaykin  
Lenin Delsol  
Steve Ditko  
George Freeman  
Mike Grell  
Mike Gustovich  
Marc Hempel  
Bruce Patterson  
Doug Rice  
Mark Silvestri  
Bob Smith  
Joe Staton  
Timothy Truman  
Bill Willingham  
Mark Wheatley

## STAFF

Joe Staton, Art Director  
Rick Oliver, Associate Editor  
Bruce Patterson, Production Coordinator  
Doug Rice, Production Assistant  
Jim Layer, Production Assistant  
Kathy Kotsivas, Office Manager  
Ivy Graham, Secretary

## COLORISTS

Janice Cohen  
Wendy Fiore  
Bruce Patterson  
Lynn Varley

## SPECIAL APPEARANCES

Mike Baron  
Terry Beatty  
Richard Bruning  
John Byrne  
Max Collins  
Phil Foglio  
Fred Hembeck  
Don Lomax  
Francis Mao  
Lee Marris  
Joshua Quagmire  
Steve Rude  
Reed Waller

All the talented professionals above have contributed to the success of First Comics during our initial year. We gratefully acknowledge their support and continuing contributions.

Mike Gold,  
Managing Editor

Richard Felber,  
Business Manager

Rick Obadiah,  
Publisher

**FIRST**  
COMICS™  
COUNT ON US!



theirs clashed too much. Mine was just too different: it was a lot more organic, and there was hardly any machinery in it. What was in it was all streamlined. It looked like '30s rockets! The needle-nosed stuff. But they weren't going to have any of that. And why should they? It was totally wrong.

DIANA: So, to go back a bit, how did you specifically come up with the Rocketeer character?

DAVE: Well, the Rocketeer came from the serials, because when I was a little kid, I used to see *Dick Tracy* and *Rocketman* and some of the others, and I wanted to be Commando Cody; I made a little cardboard mask and ran around the yard pretending I was flying. Everybody does it, right? For a long time I was Zorro, too. I used to ride around on my tricycle with a black cape (*laugh*), always gettin' it tangled up in the wheels, too; my mother remembers that. But Rocketman has kind of stuck with me all through life. It was a combination of the leather jacket and the metal mask and the contraption on his back: it was always to me a very powerful image, that of a "human rocket". I always liked rockets--the old classic rockets that went "sshew" to a point with the big fins on the back: the Flash Gordon rockets. So, that bullet-shaped helmet really grabbed me. When it came time to do this, I thought "Well shoot, I'll do this type of a character and make it kind of a tribute to the serials--to the things that I loved as a kid," and really I still love them. They're not as exciting to see now, but there's still a lot of charm there.

DIANA: I was going to ask about all this incredible research that Bill (Schanes) says you do, but I guess I'll forget that question! (*Dave had earlier discounted Schanes' statement.*)

DAVE: Well, I do some. I'll show you: I even brought some homework. Just flip through it. It's full of photos of that particular type of plane that I'm going to have to draw a lot of. Actually, I do go around to a lot of old book stores--

DIANA: Just for the record, here, this is a book called *Boeing* and it looks to be full of airplanes and details of--

DAVE: Detailed photographs and descriptions of a Peashooter, which was the first pursuit plane that the army used as an air force plane, right up until World War II. I'm going to use it in the last chapter (*of The Rocketeer*), so I figured I'd better do my homework and know what I'm drawing and know how they flew.

DIANA: So you do this kind of scouting around for--

DAVE: For as much of the stuff as I can.

But I don't spend hours with a magnifying glass looking at old cars trying to make sure that every bit of the grill is right.

DIANA: But it's primarily the hardware that you research?

DAVE: Yep, pretty much. The rest of it I fake, because the clothing styles and that kind of thing--if you have a pretty good knowledge of it from watching old movies or looking at old movie stills...once you get the feel for that kind of clothing--it's pretty easy to go through and do it without having to constantly refer to something, because people wore suspenders, the

shirts were looser, the trousers were fuller, you know. But for the most part, most of the buildings and planes and cars are the things that I'll go and find photos of, just because it's ridiculous to try and draw a vintage car without having anything at all to look at. If I can't find photographs, I'll go out and find a little model car or a toy car and hold it under a light and draw it, just to make sure that proportions are fairly accurate. I can't always do that with photographs, so I have to make do; it's either toy models or something. Once in a while I'll make up a car, I'll fudge, but it really shows to anybody who knows cars: they'll say "Whoa! It really shrank here!"

DIANA: So I gather that that kind of accuracy--that kind of attention to detail--is important to you.

DAVE: Sure, I want it to feel true to the reader. But, in any kind of period strip, no matter what the period is--if it's Civil War or Three Musketeers or whatever--you have to go back and get a certain amount of accurate detail for set dressing and flavour, or else it just won't play.

DIANA: Well you have to go back. There are several so-called artists working in the field who wouldn't bother.

DAVE: Sure, but they're probably on a tight schedule to put out a book that's a regular monthly, and they can't really take the time, and they don't feel justified by making themselves sweat all the more, because the money isn't all that good, and the rewards just aren't there for doing that kind of work, unless you have some kind of sweet deal. So, on one hand, you can blame them for doing such a schlocky, quick job and kind of slapdash drawing, but on the other hand you also have to take into account the fact that they're trying to make a living at it and some people can not draw well fast. To do a good drawing takes them too long, so they have to do as well as they can in the amount of time that they can allot for a page in order to eke by. I, on



DAVE STEVENS

Photo (C) Carolyn Chin

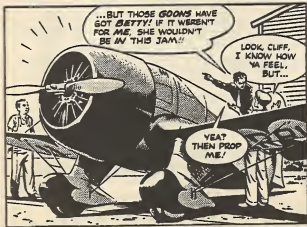
the other hand, don't have to maintain that, because in the beginning, I knew that I wasn't going to do a monthly book--I wasn't even going to do a bi-monthly book--and unfortunately for Pacific, that's never going to be the case with me. If they're lucky, it's going to be a quarterly, and that's if I don't have other things that interrupt my work--I'd like to do it more often, but between other jobs and the fact that I am real particular about the quality of my work, it's just never going to be. I'm not concerned with just producing some fan's monthly need for a fix. He can get any number of other comics to do that for him--any of the "team" books or any of that stuff. I'm concerned with just producing a very small body of work that's going to speak well for me in the years to come, because once you let out something like *Aurora*, it's going to haunt you for the rest of your life, if you choose to look at it that way. I mean, if it's bad, or weak work, and you're painfully aware of the fact, you're going to be rubbed raw by it every time you see it, so I just won't allow myself to do work that I'd be ashamed to have printed. I'll destroy it first. But with (*Aurora*), it was kind of a favour to Bruce, too.

DIANA: So you don't really intend to do comics on a full-time basis?

DAVE: No, never. Well, when I was younger, I thought it would be a great thing to do for a livelihood, but once you do it and find out how much work it really is... I would be crazy to even attempt it on a regular basis with all the sweat that I put into it. I'm just too much of a perfectionist for this quick-print format--the reproduction I get and the colouring are horrible. It's made for quick trash... like McDonald's food: you have to turn out a volume of it to satisfy the hunger of the audience, and it doesn't matter if there's no quality in it or nutrients. It's just got to be there when the audience demands it; otherwise...they'll spend their money elsewhere.

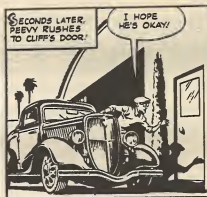
DIANA: Other than comics, what kind of commercial art are you doing?

DAVE: Most types. A lot of advertising, storyboards for commercials and animation,



(C) Dave Stevens

One of the results of Stevens' research time



(C) Dave Stevens

not as much live action, though I'm working on one right now--

DIANA: Storyboards for a live action film?

DAVE: Yeah, a really neat horror movie. It's pretty much Bill Stout's pet project, but he pulled me in on it too, because they needed another person to do boards, so it's between the two of us so far. For the most part, I'll do any job commercially that appeals to me, that I can also make a good dollar off of. I won't work for potatoes, and I won't work on something that I don't think I can do well on. I pick and choose what I do. If somebody will call and say "I've got this job and I want you to draw me basketball players," I'll think about it, and if I'm not excited about basketball players, I'll tell him no, but I'll refer him to somebody else. A lot of people think that's ridiculous--to turn down work just because you don't like drawing this or that--but it's my career--heck! I mean, if I'm not going to have fun doing it, I'll turn it down. There's always more work around the corner. So...what was the question?

DIANA: The question was "What other work are you doing?"

DAVE: I'm doing other covers... You mean as far as comics go?

DIANA: Well, outside of comics.

DAVE: Some work on movie ads, a cover for a "Pirates" pocketbook from Bantam, and not as much animation work. I haven't done any in the last couple of years; I've pretty much gotten out of it. I worked in animation studios for about four years in L.A.

DIANA: At Hanna-Barbera?

DAVE: Hanna-Barbera, DePatie-Freleng, Filimation, Ruby Spears...everybody. And got so fed up with the same McDonald's-type mentality of "Get that Saturday morning trash out there, no matter how bad it looks" (or smells!)-you know, the Scooby-"Doo-doo" shows! Man, I had a bloody head from beating it against the wall. It was just too much, and after years of that or even months... That's why I was hopping from studio to studio: I would just get so frustrated at one place I'd think "There's got to be another place that does better quality or will allow me to do something better than this." But that's not the case.



# THE GUESTS YOU WANT TO SEE EXCLUSIVELY AT CREATION

AMERICA'S NUMBER ONE  
NATIONWIDE CONVENTION

**comics & star trek show**

**IN PERSON**

**JIMMY DOOHAN**  
Scotty of Star Trek

**BORIS VALLEJO**  
World Famous Fantasy Artist

**BOB LAYTON**  
Marvel Comics Superstar Artist

**BUTCH GUICE**  
Marvel's Micronsauts Illustrator

**MAJEL BARRETT**  
Star Trek's Nurse Chapel



# OAKLAND JULY 30-31

Tickets on sale now at all  
seven COMICS & COMIX stores

I was fooling myself thinking that any of those places that turned out that kind of work would ever allow you to do anything even one notch above what they were used to taking. They'd just throw it out and do what they were used to doing. I just wrote off animation once I left, which was about half a year or so before doing *The Rocketeer*, and then I just went back into advertising full-time.

DIANA: Okay. On to Betty, who's caused as much--or more--sensation as *The Rocketeer*. You mentioned at dinner that she was originally an obscure little joke that you thought no one would pick up on! So I gather you're a Betty Page pin-up fan and that she's not simply the result of a Frazetta influence.

DAVE: Yeah--Cat (Ironvode) made that mistake: thinking she was a Frazetta swipe. Betty was and is my favourite female to look at. I've collected stuff on her for years, and it was just the most natural thing to do, to put her into the strip. If you're going to do a strip and put characters in it that you're going to have to live



The famous Betty: not just a Frazetta swipe

with for a while, you'll darn sure put the ones in it that you're most in love with. I'm trying to think of a good example... (Alex) Toth: Jesse Bravo is Errol Flynn, Toth's favourite actor. And I thought when I did that--by putting Betty into it--that I'd get a few guys in Kalamazoo who would snicker and say "I know what he's doing," or a few others in New York, who remembered (or knew) her from the '50s, might recognize her. But I was not at all prepared for the way it ended up, which was hysteria, really, on the part of the readers. It seems like every other letter I get, they mention Betty Page--not just Betty. They even send me photos from their own collections. It's really something.

DIANA: And you've never mentioned her last name in the strip?

DAVE: Never. They see that image and immediately the little light clicks on: "Gee, I haven't seen her in 20 or 30 years!"

DIANA: Well, she's pretty hot, you know!

DAVE: I just draw 'em as I see 'em--and yes, she was that.



(C) Dave Stevens

DIANA: With the advent of non-Code colour comics, several artists have begun flirting with nudity, some excessively so, even though the books are still sold to kids. Yet Betty, who to me is the *essence* of cheesecake, is completely inoffensive in this regard. Why do you think that is?

DAVE: I think it's all in the way I'm presenting her. Betty *isn't* a cheap or sleazy character--I'm not trying to appeal to the "horn-dog" instincts of the reader; not peddling "T&A" for its own sake...which may sound like "so much air", but it's true. Whenever Betty pops up--there's a point to it. She's not just there for set dressing, like some female characters. When I focus on her, it's generally to reveal some other aspect of cliff's character (along with hers)--some quirk, a weakness, or a strength, or whatever--while at the same time, showing the reader (literally) what she's doing for a living. And I'll be treading a thin line here, I know, because, in presenting that cheesy backdrop, there's always a tendency toward "over-exposure"--going overboard. The closest I've come was that full-page surprise shot, last chapter. But, to me, there was nothing excessive about it--or in bad taste. It was just very funny. Her reaction, the photographer's--the way it played, it was probably the funniest moment



(C) Dave Stevens



in the series. And tastefully handled, I think. I think I have enough good judgement to know where to "draw the drapes." I don't want to offend or alienate any readers with stuff that isn't necessary. It would just be dumb and irresponsible. But, if I were going to "go for the gusto"--I'd darned sure slap an "adults only" tag on the cover. This is something that several publishers should consider doing with various titles--Pacific in particular. It's just a good idea to let the reader (and the retailer) know what he's in for.

DIANA: Can you tell me something about the Betty lookalike contest? I find that really intriguing.

DAVE: I can't tell you much yet--it hasn't even started. Actually, I had thought of doing something similar as a kind of a gimmick for personal appearances or something like that, just something fun. I think maybe I might have mentioned it once to (Dave) Scroggy, but it was his idea to do it in the book as a legitimate thing--only Pacific didn't come up with a prize to offer. I said "David, you can't just give these girls subscriptions. Girls don't read comic books--they don't want funnybooks! They want cash!"

DIANA: Waitaminnit...!

DAVE: Well...the majority of gals would prefer money, or anything else, to comics. If you want a girl to send in a photo of herself to some lookalike contest, you'd better have some kind of cash prize or something for the winner, and (Pacific) didn't come up with anything. I said "Well, at least give them a \$50. gift certificate or something," and they didn't want to do that either, so I had to come up with the ungodly commitment of doing a portrait of the winner! (Laughter) Well, we have to give out something that will appeal to a woman, and a portrait should. So that's what the prize is going to be, and I hope we get some good entries. Not a bunch of ha-ha's, like guys in wigs (laughter)... I'm expecting that from Harlan Ellison; he called up and said, "Stevens, that's the sleaziest thing I've ever...!" because he assumed I was doing it just to meet some great-looking gals!

DIANA: Are you judging the contest?

DAVE: Through the mail, yeah.

DIANA: But are you the sole judge, or is Pacific helping you out?

DAVE: Well I'll be handling it, but I am going to lay out all the pictures and have them look at them too. It'll be kind of a committee decision.

DIANA: Are you expecting facials or are you expecting some cheese as well?

DAVE: There may be, and Scroggy was of the opinion that there was going to be gobs of it, and I tried to explain to him that these are mostly going to be fans' girlfriends. If a fan takes a picture of his girlfriend to enter this contest, he's not going to send a dirty photo; he's going to be very protective and he's going to send you what

you asked for: a head shot. So I'm not expecting anything rude at all.

DIANA: Are you going to publish the winning photo?

DAVE: I would like to--on the inside back cover, in black and white. I think we should, really, just to show that it actually took place. It's funny, because I've gotten mixed reactions from a lot of people, some thinking that it's the most ridiculous idea; but Al Williamson said "I envy you!" (Laughter)

DIANA: Let's see, aside from Frassetta, who must have been a heavy influence--

DAVE: --yeah, he had the best lines--

DIANA: --who else has influenced your artwork?

DAVE: Well, probably the biggest would be Steranko, just because I was exposed to his work for the longest amount of time. I exclusively sought his work when I was a kid, because it appealed to me the most. He was at that time trying a lot of things that were just blowing everybody else right out of the water. Then there's Kirby, just for solid action storytelling. Eisner for

WE HAVE TO CALL THE POLICE,  
HE COULD BE HURT SOMEWHERE!



Do you look like this woman???

stories and the human element--trying to impart a little more to it content-wise than normal, but I don't know if I'll ever get to that point. I like all the other guys--the Woods and Williamsons; beyond them, most of the other people who I really admire haven't been active in the field for the last 10 or 15 years, or they're dead. That's one of the reasons why I don't collect current comics and don't read them: most of the people that I feel I can learn a good deal from--enough to justify paying the money for the comic book--aren't doing them any more, and the people that are doing comics are making the same mistakes I'm making, so I don't really want to look at their work and see exactly what I know I'm doing wrong also. If I'm going to pay for a book, I want to buy something that I feel I can learn a lot from and benefit from in a lot more ways than I can from my peers.

DIANA: And yet, you were a reader and a fan when you were younger--when this was not a career for you.

DAVE: Sure, and then I was ravenous for it, but--like with entrées--you reach a point where you begin to push away the bland stuff and go for the delicacies. Unfortunately, there just aren't many good cooks in the



**WALLY WOOD  
WILL EISNER  
.....  
THE OUTER  
SPACE SPIRIT**

THE COMPLETE COLLECTION • TEXT BY  
WILL EISNER • PETE HAMILL • CAT YRON-  
WODE • DELUXE PAPERBACK EDITION •

COMING SOON TO

**COMICS & COMIX**

This book was prematurely announced as a 1982  
release. Now firmly scheduled for June 1983.

FROM KITCHEN SINK PRESS



(C) Dave Stevens

kitchen these days. Just a lot of hash-slingers. So, those of us with gourmet appetites either go hungry--or begin cooking for ourselves out of desperation! As for comics being a career, I don't think I'll ever look at it as that, because I don't intend for it to be my career. It's kind of a side career, a hobby more than anything else. It would be a career if I had to do that and that alone, and was under a contract,

and made up my mind that I didn't want to do anything else, which I'll never do. It's just too much work. If the rewards were there, then maybe I would.

DIANA: At least this part of *The Rocketeer* is slated to end in *PACIFIC PRESENTS #3*. Do you have plans to continue the strip from there?

DAVE: I don't know if from that exact point, but soon after that.

DIANA: So it's not something that you see as kind of a limited series concept, where you do it once and you're sort of done with it?

DAVE: It is limited inasmuch as, as soon as I get tired of it or bored with it or feel that I'm getting stale, I'll drop it--I'll stop. Because there's nothing that upsets me more than seeing somebody losing his inspiration halfway through a series and getting tired of it and losing the lustre that he had in the first few.

DIANA: What about some of the other work that you're doing for Pacific? You've talked about *Aurora*, but you're doing other covers...

DAVE: I'm doing the cover for *ALIEN WORLDS #4*, and inking an interior story (over Bruce Jones' pencils) titled "Princess Pam". Another cover for *VANGUARD #2*, the cover for *WORLD OF WOOD #1*... That's all so far. I'd like very much to ink a few of Jack (Kirby)'s covers, just because I feel like he's not being inked properly, and he hasn't for years. Nobody takes the time to do what I feel needs to be done with his work to really make it shine. I mean, his pencils basically haven't changed in 30 to 40 years: if you've seen his pencils back then and his pencils now, they're pretty close. It's just that the inking he was getting back then was much better and much sharper, by people who really knew how to draw. And the inking he's getting today is not. So I'm hoping--and Jack wants to have me ink some--I'm hoping I can do a *CAPTAIN VICTORY* or whatever else comes up. I guess my main gripe is that people don't embellish his stuff; they just ink exactly what's there, including all his

construction lines, which is ridiculous. You don't do that with any artist. You redraw a little and strengthen the lines and, while inking, overlook the lines that he never intended to be inked in the first place and then erase them. So if and when I get to ink one, you'll see rounded fingers. (Joe Sinnott was probably the best person for that type of "polishing" on Jack's work. He always did just the right amount, and that's what I'd try to do.

DIANA: So although you don't see comics as a career per se, it's not something that you're going to casually leave behind.

DAVE: Oh no. I'll probably always be doing a little of it, if something comes up that really appeals to me, and I feel like I can do it and maintain excitement over it, whatever it is--if it's collaborative stuff, which is unusual for me, or a small series, or whatever.

DIANA: I gather from some of your earlier comments that you're not real thrilled by the current state of mainstream comics.

DAVE: Well, no, but then everybody likes to wail and moan about how there's nothing worth buying and sound real smug about the fact that there are one or two things that are good--and it happens to be their own! (Laughter) But I don't feel that my stuff is all that different. I'm hoping as I go that it'll get better to where it will stand out, on the stands. I don't think it does now, but give me a chance. The problem with most of it is that the audience is used to one particular type of character--and that is the slam-bang underwear boys that pretty much all look the same and all act the same and all talk the same and all beat each other up the same



Cover illustration (C) Dave Stevens

in the same amount of pages issue after issue, and I don't know if conditioning has... I don't know why they keep buying the stuff. Some of the writing is good every now and then, but that's like one one-hundredth per cent of what's out there that I have read, and the same percentage is well drawn. So it's not a real rosy picture if you're looking at the American comic form and trying to find something redeemable in it--you're just not going to. It's a trash package and it's trash contents for the most part, with few exceptions.



Irving store manager DEAN LETO with DAVE STEVENS

Photo (C) Carolyn Chin

DIANA: What about the independents? Do you feel somewhat differently about them?

DAVE: Hopeful. Just because people like (Max) Collins and (Terry) Beatty are trying things like MS. TREE, and while it may not be my cup of tea, I applaud them for trying something different--anything other than superheroes. I have had it with superheroes up to my eyeteeth. So, if we're lucky, some other genres may also be re-introduced that will take hold besides the standard.

DIANA: One last question: In the last year or so, you've gone from being a relative unknown in the comic marketplace to suddenly attaining a certain superstar status. How does that feel to you, to be the center of attention in comics fandom?

DAVE: Good, in that finally I'm getting some kind of a slap on the back for all the work. I've trained myself to do this type of thing all my life, and at one point didn't think I was ever going to use it, because a year ago I couldn't get arrested, and I was drawing exactly the same. I just hadn't done anything on my own; I was just helping other people and pretty much disinterested in comics. I do think, though, that a lot of the big to-do over writers and artists and specific people, and turning them into--

DIANA: --performers--

DAVE: --yeah, I think it's quite overdone, for no good reason really--because we're not performers. We're entertainers certainly, but the fans shouldn't expect us to go around the country with our new books like some kind of a travelling vaudeville show. On one hand, I like the fact that we get some kind of acclaim, but on the other hand, it's such a drop in the bucket when you think about it, because you're catering to such a limited audience, really. At the risk of sounding puffed up, I'm not satisfied with that. My sights are just a little higher than comics. I mean, if comics were the pinnacle for me--if I wanted to be another Walt Kelly or if I attained to that specifically--I'd probably be in heaven right now, thinking "Oh man, I've got the world by the tail, every fan knows my name." But all this does is kind of add fuel to the fire for me, to make me strive for something completely beyond comics.

DIANA: What is the pinnacle for you?

DAVE: I don't know. When I reach it, I'll probably feel satisfied. Some new medium, maybe--I don't know. Not to cheapen what I've done, or the comic form: it's just that it doesn't satisfy me like I thought it would as a kid. It's just one step into whatever it is I'm going to do. It's like taking a baby step, and your parents go "Hurray! Take another one!" I don't want to just trudge along the same road that the Wally Woods and the Caniffs and everybody else are on. I don't want to just add my name to that list and do that for the rest of my life, sitting at a drawing board 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It's just not for me. I'm of the mind that I want to leap, jump, hop, and sail.



(C) Jones and Stevens

Princess Pam from ALIEN WORLDS #4

\*\*\*\*\*





© 1983 MARVEL COMICS GROUP

For anyone interested in submitting work to us, the format and requirements are printed in FANFARE #4. A brief recap of them is listed below:

**SendXeroxes.** do not send original art. Each submission should include a stamped, self-addressed envelope with proper postage. Otherwise, we cannot return them, and they will be thrown away.

**WRITERS** - Submit brief plot synopses ONLY. Do not send scripts, short stories, or long, long outlines. Submissions MUST be typed. A plot synopsis should be less than two typed pages. Send two synopses at most.

**PENCILERS** - Submit 2-4 pages of panel-to-panel continuity. DO NOT send pin-ups, abstract art, landscapes, etc. Draw with pencil on kid-finish Bristol paper. Your pages should be one half times larger than the pages in the printed comics. Draw any character you want, but show a variety of settings and situations. Prove that you can draw ordinary people, super heroes, action and quiet scenes,

**INKERS** - This is a tough one. First, you've got to get a pencil drawing in ink, yours or someone else's. It's perfectly all right to trace the drawing. Again the drawing should be on kid-finish Bristol paper, and preferably it should be panel-to-panel continuity. Before inking the pencil art (with india ink) PHOTOCOPY it. Submit both the inked pencil drawing and the photocopy of the original pencil art. Two to four pages is fine.

**LETTERERS** - Submit samples of lettering approximately one-and-one-half times larger than the lettering printed in the comics. Include samples of sound-effects, titles, and display lettering. Letter your sample in India ink on kid-finish Bristol paper.

**COLORISTS** - There really is no easy way to submit coloring samples because our coloring process is very complicated and very specialized. If you really want to try, though, buy a copy of a Marvel pocket book that has black-and-white printing. These are on sale at most stores

that carry paperbacks. Photocopy half a dozen or so pages on BOND PAPER. Color these bond paper copies with colored inks, dyes, watercolors, or whatever. We use Dr. Martin's watercolor dyes which may not be available where you are, but that's not important. If your samples are really outstanding and we want to try you out on some of our regular pages using our professional materials we'll LOAN you a coloring kit. Remember, however, that our regular printing process is very restrictive. A lot of modeling and color blending will only prove to us that you don't know the limits of our processes. In general, the simpler your coloring samples are, the better they are.

All submissions should be addressed to:

Jim Shooter  
Editor in Chief  
Marvel Comics  
387 Park Avenue South  
New York, NY 10016

# PRESERVING A SENSE OF WONDER...

## BERKELEY

2461 Telegraph 94704  
415/845-4091

## CITRUS HEIGHTS

6135 Sunrise 95610  
916/969-0717

## SACRAMENTO

921 K Street Mall 95814  
916/442-5142

## SAN FRANCISCO

700 Lombard 94133  
415/982-3511

## SAN FRANCISCO

650 Irving 94122  
415/665-5888

## PALO ALTO

515 Cowper 94301  
415/328-8100

## FAIRFIELD

Solano Mall 94533  
707/427-1202

SCIENCE  
FICTION

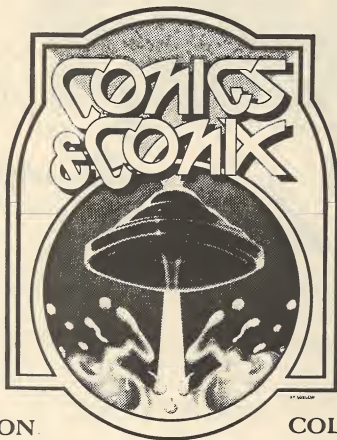
NEW  
COMICS

T-SHIRTS

BUTTONS

FANTASY  
GAMES

JAPANESE  
TOYS



ANIMATION

COLLECTABLES

GREETING CARDS

FILM PUBLICATIONS

ALTERNATIVE  
COMIX

---

**20% OFF ADVENTURE GAMES**

**10% OFF JAPANESE TOYS, BOOKS, AND POSTERS**

This coupon good at all seven Comix & Comix stores until August 31, 1983. Applies only to merchandise specified. Limited to one per customer per store.

# SOLANO MALL GRAND OPENING !!

## Lucky 7

Seven has always been my favourite number. I like the way it sounds, I like the way it looks, and I especially like the fact that it is *odd*! No, this isn't fodder for the budding numerologists among you. A commentary on the number seven is simply propitious at this time as it has recently proved to be a very lucky number for COMICS & COMIX--and, by example, perhaps for the entire industry.

Friday, June 17th marked the official opening of the seventh COMICS & COMIX store, at the Solano Mall in Fairfield. Presiding over the gala event were members of our own administrative brass along with Gary Falati, the Mayor of Fairfield. Following the ribbon-cutting ceremonies, Mayor Falati signed a proclamation declaring the next day, June 18th, to be Comics Day in Fairfield! This sparked a week-end of festivities with guests galore, including Chris Claremont, famed writer of THE X-MEN.

The Solano Mall store exemplifies an important development for COMICS & COMIX and for the industry as a whole. No longer confined to small neighbourhood outlets, the specialty shop is now beginning to branch out from its limited clientele and to welcome humanoids of all sizes, shapes, and ages! Comic retailers have grown up, leaving behind their dusty stacks of old

comics filed in flimsy cardboard boxes, and are now moving into a more professional appearance and approach. The Solano Mall store is bright and appealing, with white, wooden fixtures designed to serve the needs of both comic retailer and customer. While the advent of the direct sales market pumped adrenalin into the heart of a dying business, it also narrowed the comic audience into a specialized consumer group, thereby eliminating the mass market benefits of the newsstand days of comics. Now, however, that the direct market is starting to establish itself in homogeneous shopping areas, such as malls, the customer base can only mushroom in size. This bodes well for the entire industry.

And the bottom line is this: it bodes well for you too. It's simply a matter of demand and supply. With more and more people getting interested in and buying comics, more and more new product will surface: not only more new comics, but more new kinds of comics designed to appeal to this ever-widening marketplace. Superheroes should become only one of a variety of genres available to a large comic-buying public while better quality production should emerge as the standard, rather than the rare commodity it is at present.

And that, gentle readers, would be a real stroke of luck for us all.

-- Diana Schutz



Some of the company brass at the grand opening celebration: (from left to right) SCOTT MAPLE, TOM WALTON, J.W. CHAPMAN, GEORGE EVANS, and JIM SINCLAIR.



Welcome to the very first installment of *The Lion's Denny*, a regular column of reviews, remarks, and other snotty commentary by our very own Matthew Denny. Matt is the editor of his own fanzine, *Comics Coast to Coast*, and perhaps one of the few literate adolescents left on this planet, with a keen eye and a sharp wit to match. There's more I could tell you about Matt, but since none of it is printable, I'll let him take over.

-- Editor

all of the negative aspects of the styles of Chris Claremont and Stan Lee into one embarrassing package. Furthermore, they follow the popular "more is better" theory, whereby the writer guarantees success by cramming as many superheroes into a single issue as possible. I follow the "frozen yogurt" theory: too much makes me throw up.

Just as Levitz' writing combines the bad aspects of otherwise competent writers, Giffen's layouts are taken from the worst work of people like George Perez and Trevor von Edden. A swipe artist like Bill Sienkiewicz is not at all offensive, seeing as he knows how to use what he is swiping; Giffen, however, is satisfied simply to slap all of his influences together into a big mess. Part two of the frozen yogurt theory points out that while frozen yogurt is quite tasty, it is vile when mixed with meat loaf.

Without the inking of Larry Mahlstedt, fans might have picked up on the fact that Giffen was doing bad swipes; Mahlstedt, however, is such a slick inker that his work covers up Giffen's lack of skill at draftsmanship. Although this doesn't improve the layouts, it does make the actual drawings more visually appealing--but I think that Mahlstedt's talent would go to better use on another book with a more original penciller, for example Pat Broderick's *FIRESTORM*.

Perhaps my dislike for *LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES* is magnified by the fact that it is adored by so many fans. With so many fantastic, unrecognized comics on the stands, it pains me to see this one being considered one of the field's best.

THOR #337

Walter Simonson is one of the most talented all-around professionals in the comic book business. His skills range from writing to pencilling to inking to lettering, and his style has influenced such fan favorites as Frank Miller and Marshall Rogers. It is unfortunate that he is not given the acclaim that these fan favorites are given, for it will cause many people to skip over his first issue of *THOR*--which is the best I've ever read.

LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES: The Darkseid Saga

(Be forewarned: unlike 90% of the comic book reading population, I am not a fan of Paul Levitz', Keith Giffen's, and Larry Mahlstedt's *LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES*. If you will find the following obnoxious remarks offensive or distressing, I strongly suggest that you move on to a more pleasant review.)

*LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES* is an example of everything that is wrong about comics these days, with the *Darkseid Saga* in particular being the story against which bad comics will be judged for years to come. In fact, in order to save any thrifty readers the cost of buying these expensive back issues, I will now present the entire story in a condensed form:

*Thunderwolf/Lightningschnitzel/Bombasticboy*: Look! There's a black hole! I think I'll blunder into it! Oh, God!!! It's so c-c-c-c-cold!!! (Meanwhile...)

*Abracadabraman/Plutoniumpuppy/Matter-eater Lad* (and that one's real!): Oh dad, why didn't you tell me that you were pregnant? Is that why you left me inside the cold cut bin with the giant tarantula which turned me into the freak I am today? What? What's that? Legionnaires are missing? Oh, God!!!

*Marshmallowmonster/Neutronnewt/Brawnica*: Oh, God!!! It's *Darkseid*!!! Call in every single superhero who has ever appeared in this comic book!

*Darkseid*: You win this time, Legionnaires, but I shall return (probably within a year if sales drop)!

Paul Levitz' scripts for this book are cornball soap operas/fight scenes: they combine



I will have to refrain from revealing the plot of this issue, since it contains numerous shocks and changes in the life of our blond-headed hero. However, I will note that Simonson's occasionally poetic scripting style, which he first displayed in his graphic novel STARSLAMMERS, fits in perfectly with this book. This example, from pages two and three of the book, should suffice:

"Mark well this figure and listen.... Listen....Can you hear it?...The wind is rising....The sound of thunder reverberates throughout a billion billion worlds." Neat--and much more enjoyable than "Donning his megajumpsuit, Astrokid swiftly pummels the dark villain into submission!!!!!"

Simonson's artwork is some of the field's most unique, both in terms of layout and actual drawing style, and it is in almost top form on this book. While the drawings are obviously not done with as much care as those in STARSLAMMERS, they still display the intriguingly loose, yet controlled Simonson look. As for his layout style, his style is that he has none: each page is a new experience. Unlike Trevor von Eeden's layouts, however, Simonson's do not confuse the reader nor make it difficult to read the story. The purpose of his pictures is first and foremost to tell the story.

Comics have lost a lot of their charm for me after about two years of reading them, and I tend to just skim through all but my absolute favorites. For 20 minutes after discovering this advance photocopy in the mail, however, I sat enthralled by both the artwork and the story. This is one of the few comics that is bringing excitement back into the field, and I strongly urge you to throw your support behind it. It's a gold ring in what sometimes appears to be a field of horse manure.

#### NEXUS #2

Along with CEREBUS, NEXUS is one of the two frontrunners of the independent comics field. It is an intelligently written superhero comic: something that has become somewhat of a contradiction in terms in recent years.

NEXUS recently switched to a four-color format and pushed its production up from quarterly to bimonthly, and while the story remains as enjoyable as ever, I must say that the new format has detrimentally affected the artwork of Steve Rude. The appeal of Rude's drawings lies in their simplicity--something that the black and white format accentuated. With all of the color in this Baxter book, Rude's simple lines are obscured. Also, judging by this issue and the previous one, Rude has put down his Alex Toth books and has been looking at a bit of Neal Adams. If this extremely talented new artist metamorphoses into an Adams clone, I will consider having a requirement passed by all

independent publishers that no artist look at a Neal Adams book while in their employ. In spite of these criticisms, though, the artwork remains original, and more importantly, extremely well integrated with the script.

Mike Baron's writing on this comic is simply superb, and although NEXUS has become a bit more like a standard superhero comic than it first appeared to be, it is still most...different. Baron's characters are real people, not the caricatures found in most Marvel and DC comics. The storyline is intricate, but a long, printed summary of the preceding issues appears at the beginning of every book for new readers.

Because it is both well done and about a sort of superhero, NEXUS stands a better chance than most independent comics of being accepted by a market nurtured on DC and Marvel. Baron and Rude may be introducing an entirely new group of people to the independents.

#### SOMERSET HOLMES #1

Alone. Vulnerable. Terrified. Large-breasted. This is Somerset Holmes: a woman who spends the majority of her first appearance in comics running around being propositioned and/or attacked by large men, not to mention losing her undergarments. It's about time we had a real woman character like this in comics--not like those saucy Claremont broads.

All facetiousness aside here, SOMERSET HOLMES is a very good comic, though not a remarkable one by any means. The theory of the weak, vulnerable woman is dashed to pieces when she smashes a haddie's face into a toilet seat, and then exclaims (in a thought balloon, of course): "How did I do that?" You see, she's got amnesia.

Bruce Jones' scripting job on this book is back to a par with his KA-ZAR scripts, and a very large step above the tripe that he seems to be pumping out for ALIEN WORLDS and TWISTED TALES. The most interesting element of this issue's script is its almost total lack, made possible by the fact that the entire book is one long chase scene. His excuse for the name "Somerset Holmes" is cute.

Brent Anderson's art, simply by virtue of his own inks, is very eye-pleasing, and some of his layouts are very imaginative and effective. While he obviously spent more time on the X-MEN graphic novel, this book is nothing to be ashamed of.

Final verdict? SOMERSET HOLMES is very good, but not on a level with books like NEXUS or CEREBUS. It is, however, definitely worth picking up--preferably at COMICS & COMIX. Can I have that raise now?

(Not on yer life, kid. -- Ed.)



Artwork (C) Brent Anderson

Somerset Holmes



We call it *Newave*.

It has nothing to do with New Wave music, but perhaps a wee bit in common with New Wave cinema circa 1958.

We do comix. On a small scale. Fast. We trade them mostly, but we sell a few. We do it for fun, friendship, and the intellectual stimulation that results from a free exchange of ideas.

The newave comix are either minis or digestz (DZs). A mini-comic is eight pages of art, talk, design, collagerie, whatever, measuring 3½" x 5". DZs may be 5" x 8" (like COMIX WAVE MAGAZINE) or 5" x 7" (VAULT OF HUMOR). The medium has worked well as an introductory one for budding cartoonists. We learn by doing. Out of our doodles and correspondence, we have created a tight network of funny folks from areas as remote as Lexington, Kentucky to Vashon, Washington.

The newavers are mostly in their early twenties, but we're not ageist. A lot of older folks contribute, some of them pros in the industry. How come? Well, a lot of the guys remember how lonely it was back when they were trying to break in, and they contribute to the minis to show their support for their younger brothers and sisters. I've been criticized for publishing pros and amateurs side by side, but only by those who don't understand the nature of COMIX WAVE. Amateurs are the pros of tomorrow, and they learn by comparison. This is why the COMIX WAVE artists show so much improvement from year to year.

Someone criticized Jay Kennedy for publishing the Newaves in his *Underground Price Guide*, and one person said this would mean that anyone could sit down and scribble a mini-comic and have instant fame. Well, fine. Do it. We'll publish it. But that has not proven true. Those who do minis and don't have the calling find out very quickly in this game. The ones who have a developing talent find praise and support during the time they need it most. We know what we are doing and the ever-expanding quantity of minis and DZs proves it.

There is a lot of difference between Newave and the over or underground (or ground-level) establishments. We are not looking for any particular drawing style.

We're not interested in promoting superheroism with its absurd anatomy and cyclical plots. We're not interested in built-in sex and violence for its own sake. We're not into a cult of beauty and fantasy which ties in with advertising. The Newaves promote individual art-styles and encourage personal development. No one is rejected in the Newaves. We want everyone to draw and publish, to learn not only the craft, but the business; most of all, we want people to enjoy the process of art.

If you want to get into the art business, that's fine, but don't expect much more than money and notoriety. Business is about profit and loss and deadlines, not about fun. The majority of the artists in the business haven't drawn anything they really wanted to draw since they were in high school. If you work for the company, you draw the company-style and you do what the editorial board tells you to do. More often than not you sign a contract that says the art and the characters are not yours anymore. The company owns them. Underground artists of the sixties who have never made a living drawing comix are responsible for the breakthroughs, for the fact that the larger companies are now reluctantly sharing some of the profits via returned original artwork and royalties on licensed characters. The underground artists have not survived. There were too few companies, poor distribution, worse promotion. The new companies that have opened up have not become a market for the accomplished underground artists; rather they have sought out people who could draw superheroes and space hardware. A *Rolling Stone* editor once said, "We want to be the *Esquire* of our generation." The new comic companies of the 1980s want to be the *Timely* of their generation. One can only wish them luck and note that they are paying decent page rates and not interfering with artistic control.

How does Newave relate to this comix-archy? Some of the newavers will eventually work for these companies. A few have already broken in with back-up material. There has to be room for the newcomers, for the unique, the different; otherwise we're doomed to a lifetime of BUCK ROGERS, LOST IN SPACE, STAR TREK, STAR WARS, BATTLESTAR GALACTICA--a unidimensional rut. New companies that continue to seek the same commodity being sold by the establishment won't survive. They must seek out the creative rather than the imitative. Ah, but we all know what comes next. Uniqueness doesn't sell. The kids want something that looks like STAR WARS.

Collecting is based on that premise--that the kids will want what they already have. They've got one X-MEN so they buy another and another, and are they so different? Won't the same clichés pop up again and again, the same magic powers be re-used, the same battles be fought with the same copyrighted super-villains? Isn't the pleasure in the repetition-compulsion? Don't we want to see Billy yell *shazam!* and turn into the "big red cheese"? Of course. MUTANTS, DRAGONS, TEEN TITANS *ad infinitum*.

You can deal with collecting psycho-analytically, but logic doesn't work. Collecting is a disease and you either have it or you haven't. I think of drawing as a compulsion. Sometimes, I have to draw out an idea to get rid of it. Is collecting compulsive? Of course, for some. But is it logical to collect a published work when a million copies are in circulation? Not to me. Try giving away a copy of HOWARD THE DUCK #1. Or SHAZAM #1. Company hustles that paid off in big bucks on the newsstands. But what about collecting a comic where there are only 50 to 100 copies in existence? Already collectors are trying desperately to find some of the earlier underground and newwave comix.

Get into Newave. Draw for fun. Enjoy your life. Laugh at comix, don't just collect them.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 COMIX WAVE is a registered trademark of Clay Geerdes. 1983, all rights reserved. Used here by permission.  
 \*\*\*\*\*

NEWAVE LISTING

Fluffhead 1 and 2 (.25¢ ea.)

Jacques Boivin. Available from Phantasy Press, 265 S. Harlan, Lakewood, CO, 80226. Include a .20¢ stamp for each book to cover postage.

Penguin Summer (.75¢)

Starhead Comix 3 (.50¢) and 4 (\$1.)

Contributors include Michael and Patrick Dowers, Wayne Gibson, Bruce Chrislip, Chin Mayo, Brad Poster, and Maggie Resch. Send a couple of .20¢ stamps per book for postage costs to Starhead Productions, 2319 N. 62nd, Seattle, WA, 98103.

\*\*\*\*\*

**MINI-MANIA**  
**STRIKES NATION**  
 MILLIONS TURN ON TO MINI-COMIX

ASK YOUR LOCAL COMIC BOOK STORE WHERE YOU CAN GET SOME MINIS!!

★ SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE. A MINI TO FIT EVERY NEED AND HOOD. BUY SOME, READ THEM, AND SEND THEM TO FRIENDS. NO-GREETING COMIX.

★ SAMPLE SET OF MINIS: SEND <sup>50¢</sup> TO:

CLAY GEERDES  
 BOX 7091  
 SEASIDE, CA 92127

KEEP UP ON NEWAVE AND UNDERGROUND COMIX BY SUBSCRIBING TO THE COMIX WAVE NEWS LETTER! \$2.00 FOR 24 ISSUES \$3.00 FOR 36 ISSUES



GET 'EM WHILE THEY LAST!!  
 \$3'S 1,2,3 & 4 - \$2.25 EACH  
 \$3'S 5,7,8 & 8 - \$2.50 EACH  
 INCLUDE \$1.50 POSTAGE WITH ORDER

SEND: LAST GASP ECO-FUNNES  
 TO: 2180 BRYANT ST.  
 SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF. 94110  
 SEND \$1.00 FOR CATALOG!

# Fantasy & Comic Art



## BUD PLANT inc.

As those items appear (release dates run from August to October), they will be available from Comics & Comix or direct from Bud Plant.

# BORIS VALLEJO

### BORIS Calendar 1984

Every year our most popular calendar! Thirteen bold and provocative paintings selected from his recently published book, *Mirage*. Special bonus: A two page centerfold called "Vampire", ready for permanent display. \$5.95



# ...more BORIS

### BORIS Calendar 1983

Thirteen lavish fantasy paintings by the master of fantasy art. Carefully selected from his very finest paintings. Limited supply. \$5.95

### Mirage

Famed for his fabulous fantasy illustrations, Boris now displays his talents in this new book of erotic fantasy. A stunning collection of bold and provocative works, oil new. 88 pages \$12.95

### Fantastic Art of BORIS

The premiere book on Boris, collecting his very finest paintings. Entirely unique fantasy works not included in *Mirage* or the 1984 calendar. \$9.95



# RETURN of The JEDI

### Return of the JEDI Calendar 1984

Twelve large, glossy paintings provide year-round enjoyment. Don't miss out! \$5.95

### The Art of

### Return of the JEDI

Here are the magnificent paintings created for the backgrounds, vehicles, and creatures by Ralph McQuarrie and others. If you buy no other book on the *Star Wars* saga, this is the book you'll treasure most. Over-sized and thick, almost entirely in full color. 176 pages. Ready in November. \$17.95

### Return of the JEDI Portfolio

The biggest bargains this year! Twenty stunning 11" x 16" full color prints by Ralph McQuarrie. Here are the finest and most exciting scenes, ready to frame or display immediately. \$9.95

### Return of the JEDI Sketchbook

Original drawings that inspired the creation of scenes, creatures, vehicles, cities, and more. Plus notes by George Lucas! \$5.95

### The Art of STAR WARS \$14.95

The Art of THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK \$15.95

# CEREBUS Buttons

**CEREBUS Button Set**  
Dave Sim presents five exciting images from the adventures of Cerebus the Aardvark. Here is the complete set, sure to be a unique collector's item. \$3.95

# ROWENA



### Fantastic Art of ROWENA

Next to Boris, the next most highly praised master of fantasy and erotic art. Just published, her first collection of magnificent paintings. Introduction by Boris Vallejo! \$8.95



# X-MEN

**X-MEN Portfolio #2**  
Four magnificent 11 x 14 prints present: *Alpha Flight*, *Phoenix*, *The Danger Room*, and *Wolverine*. Powerful, stunning art by Larson & Fawcett, creators of Portfolio #1. \$7.95

**X-MEN Portfolio #1**  
Still available, and at a special price! Order now and save \$2.00! Only \$4.95

# HILDEBRANDT



### REALMS OF WONDER CALENDAR 1984

Tim Hildebrandt's exciting paintings of dragons make up this new 14-plate calendar. All new work. \$7.95

MasterCard CALL TOLL FREE VISA

Get our NEW catalog FREE with your order. Over 2000 fantasy & comic art items. Special discounts available.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

If you need more space, use an additional sheet. Please print clearly.

CALL TOLL FREE	Order Total \$
800-621-6832 (9-5 Mon-Fri, Pacific Time)	Calif. residents add 6% sales tax \$
MasterCard & Visa)	Postage \$ 1.50
\$10. No CODs. For CA, AK, HI, and for information call 916-273-9588	Total \$

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

BUD PLANT, INC.  
 P.O. Box 1886BX2 Grass Valley, California 95945



# NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND

BY

*Jana*

On Friday, June 17th, a major shakedown occurred at Rip Off Press, resulting in the laying off of virtually every member of the company's staff. At present, the only two individuals remaining to govern the operations of this underground publishing house are President Fred Todd and Editor-in-Chief Gilbert Shelton. According to Todd, this drastic reduction in personnel was necessitated by a triple-barrelled effect. Due to the drug paraphernalia laws instituted earlier this year, many of the country's "head shops" were forced out of business, leaving Rip Off with a significantly smaller number of retail outlets to market their wares. Furthermore, sales of the newly-expanded RIP OFF #11 and #12 were decidedly less than expected and these issues failed to be self-financing. Add to this the fact that the rent on the Rip Off building in San Francisco jumped from relative inconsequence to one of the company's major expenses--and you have the shocking events of June 17th, a black day for Rip Off and for comix aficionados everywhere. As Todd says, "Hard to think that the comic book industry is tied up with the San Francisco real estate market," but so it is--at least until Todd manages to rent out part of the building to someone else. Anyone interested in helping out?

Although Fred and Gilbert are currently working at an insanely reduced capacity, they do intend to continue publishing and are, in fact, right now putting together a new title, FAT FREDDY'S COMICS AND STORIES, a black-and-white comic featuring the solo adventures of that Fabulous Furry Freak Brother.

Still, with undergrounds already treading a fine line in today's market, the recent events at Rip Off Press do not bode well for the industry. However, don't just sit there wringing your hands in despair. Get down immediately to your local comix shop and start picking up as many copies of RIP OFF #'s 11 and 12 as your wallet can stand. You owe it to yourself--and for those many years of laughter and fun at the hands of the Freak Brothers, we all owe it to Gilbert and Fred.

## Dale Messick Talks about Brenda Starr

What does Dale Messick do these days? She works with an art gallery in Montgomery Village. She sits outside the gallery with her art supplies and draws portraits. At first she did them with magic markers, but now they are all done in watercolor. The money goes to a high school art scholarship fund started by Ms. Messick.

Who's Dale Messick?

C'mon. In June of 1940, she started BRENDA STARR. The character she had in mind was more like Whirlwind, a glamorous adventure heroine she was drawing in school when she was ten years old, but a lady reporter she became--Brenda, not Dale. Dale did the writing and the storyboards and Brenda. "I had a staff. Never could do it all. Never did the lettering, the lining. I had John Olsen with me for 28 years. I did all the romantic fashions, the drawings of Brenda, and he did all the backgrounds. He did wonderful seascapes, fish, animals, so when I wanted to take a rest, I would put the story out in the woods."



BRENDA and DALE Photo (C) Clay Geerdes

But Whirlwind?

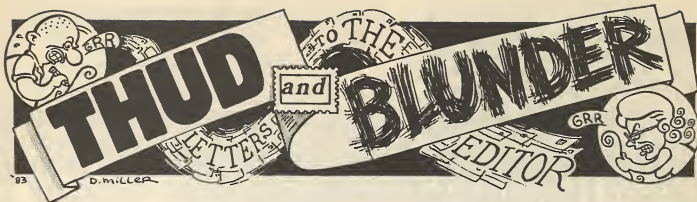
"She was a Red Cross nurse in World War I. Flew back in an airplane. I had the Statue of Liberty in the background. The villain in that strip was based on Eric Von Stroheim. He wore one of those spiked helmets the Germans were wearing."

Born in 1906 in South Bend, Indiana, Dale Messick is 77 this year. She stopped doing the BRENDA strip January 1st, 1983, turning the work over to assistants.

In Berkeley for "Wimmen's Day" at COMICS & COMIX (June 12th), Ms. Messick said, "I haven't missed a day in the Chicago Tribune in 43 years, and during that time I got married twice, divorced twice, had a terrible automobile accident and a baby."

Asked if her own life ever influenced Brenda's, she said, "I always kept it on a fantasy level. I used to get letters from women reporters who would tell me that nobody ever had a life like Brenda Starr and I'd say, 'Well, if I wrote the story the way life really is, nobody would read it.'"

-- Clay Geerdes



I had the delight of talking with you briefly at the recent Creation Con in Oakland, and picked up issue #8 of the *Wire*. I had only seen one earlier issue, and though the new one looked better, it still had a friendly and fun quality in the writing. It's also enjoyable to read a zine from this area-of the U.S., and (in having met you) knowing a bit about who's writing the words.

I enjoyed the Main Lines section and was pleased to read news I hadn't seen in *CBG* or *The Comics Journal*. (I thought they had the comic news market cornered!) Your previews of upcoming art from different books were appreciated--they were also incredibly clean reproductions.

The interview with Englehart and Leialoha was very interesting. Having just heard that Leialoha has left *COYOTE* with #2, I'm surprised that he didn't give any hints as to this move. He even indicated that he was staying with *COYOTE* 'til at least #6. But the interview was very comprehensive in all other respects--I even skipped their appearance at Creation that Saturday because I felt I'd already read everything that they might have had to say on *COYOTE*.

Also, it seemed that you had a blast conducting that interview.

I hope you can keep getting in-depth interviews with local or visiting comic talents.

Trina's Women was also interesting. I'd suggest more art samples of some of the more obscure artists she writes about.

I'm not much of an underground comix fan anymore, so I only skimmed the u.g. articles. Sorry. Still, they're valuable to have for your many comix-fan readers (especially in Berkeley), and besides, the columns might tip me off to a comix book to buy that I would've otherwise missed.

Anyhow, as I've said, I was impressed with the issue. I still think you ought to charge something for it, or at least the postage. You people deserve some reward for your efforts and work here!

Looking forward to the next issue!

Best,

Marty Stern  
San Rafael, CA

*Thanks for the kind words, Marty. Letters like yours really keep me going. I did, indeed, have a terrific time interviewing the two Steves, although at the time Steve L. had no plans to leave COYOTE and so couldn't*

*have dropped any hints. Trina's Women, unfortunately, will no longer be a regular feature in the Wire, though Trina has promised to contribute columns at least on an occasional basis. As regards charging for the Wire, well, all good things must come to an end, I suppose, and we are now in the position of having to charge \$4. for six issues to those people who wish to remain on our mailing list--to cover postage costs only. Otherwise, the Wire is still available for free at all seven COMICS & COMIX locations.*

Thanks for sending *Wire 9*. I just read your editorial and figured to throw in my two cents.

Concerning sexual content in comics, I believe that most communities have laws regarding the sale of sexually explicit material to minors, which is a good enough reason to put the words "Adults Only" on the covers of comics of this nature. Sales of these books to minors is a mistake.

And that's where I think self-regulation should end. I am completely against any self-regulation which exceeds compliance with the law. Self-regulation is often urged presupposing government (or other) interference, as you do in the last sentence of your editorial. It also presumes that such interference would prove successful. To take such a position is more than scary--we censor ourselves to avoid censorship. It doesn't accomplish the goal.

Self-regulation may be more likely to bring on outside repression than simply obeying the law, because it is like announcing to the public, "Hey, we think we have a problem here."

Of course, self-regulation is itself repression. Who is to implement a grading system? Is there anyone trusted by everyone to regularly make judgements about which comics a 17-year old may buy? Such a system turns its back on hard-won freedoms, and casts a paranoid eye towards the 1950s.

Today, thanks to new formats and better deals for creators, we comic fans have a rare opportunity to see artistic freedom unparalleled by any other contemporary commercial medium. A grading system will limit the audience size for some books, which may make the project financially unfeasible, thus ultimately limiting creative

## COMICS & COMIX CALENDAR

freedom.

Let's not throw away the opportunity we have because of our fear of what may come to pass.

Best,  
Mitch Cohn  
Albany, NY

Points well taken, Mitchell. However, given that, as you say, most communities do have laws regarding the sale of sexually explicit material to minors, my question still remains: Isn't it possible that we, as retailers, are violating such laws by selling certain issues of, say, TWISTED TALES or CAMELOT 3000 to younger readers? If so, why aren't the publishers slapping some kind of label on these books to indicate the mature nature of the contents? I grant that there are problems with a grading system and that, perhaps, I am a bit paranoid (reading Freddy Wertham can do that to a person!), but I'd hate like hell to just bury my head in the sand until the "forces of law and order" close down the specialty shops for selling so-called "pornography" to children.

In issue #9 of the *Wire*, Joe Staton suggested a rating system for comic books that resembles that of movies. I say NO! Some individuals can react to different material at levels far beyond or below their age. Instead, I recommend a suggestion system. On the cover of, say, CASPER THE FRIENDLY GHOST, it could for example say "Recommended for children 3 to 8 years old," while on COYOTE it could say "Recommended for mature audiences."

As far as David Gibbons' letter in *Thud* and *Blunder*, I believe that many of the DC and Marvel titles may be a little bit unsuitable for little kids, but that doesn't mean us bigger kids can't enjoy them.

Moving on to DC comics jumping the price gun up to 75¢, it better be good--more than that, excellent. What happened to comics just being fun? They don't have to be printed on Mando to be fun.

And over at Marvel's PUMETT! magazine and Stan Lee's bare...THAT'S SICK!!!!!!  
Sincerely,  
Jim Tracy  
Vallejo, CA

Ho-key, Jim--that's not sick, that's fun! Seriously, I kind of like the idea of a suggestion system, something that could serve as an indicator of a book's contents without necessarily (legally) restricting its potential audience. Perhaps the publishers might take this into account as a viable compromise.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Th-th-th-that's all, folks! Hope to hear from you again real soon. Send all messages and messee to: THE TELEGRAPH WIRE, 2461 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley, CA, 94704.  
\*\*\*\*\*

### Friday, July 29

The Grand Opening celebration of the Berkeley store mezzanine kicks off with guests BOB LAYTON, of *Iron Man* and *Hercules* fame, and *Micronauts* penciller BUTCH GUICE. Meet these two Marvel stars and take advantage of a Super Sale on collectible comics at the same time! Fun for all in Berkeley, 6-8 p.m.

### Saturday, July 30

The collectible mezzanine celebration in Berkeley continues. Stay tuned for details.

CREATION CONVENTION comes to Oakland again at the Hyatt Oakland Hotel, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Guest celebrities include *Star Trek*'s JIMMY DOOHAN ("Scotty") and MAJEL BARRETT ("Nurse Chapel"), fantasy illustrator BORIS VALLEJO, and Marvel artists BOB LAYTON and BUTCH GUICE. Tickets available at all COMICS & COMIX stores.

### Sunday, July 31

OAKLAND CREATION continues with its terrific line-up of guests, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. at the Hyatt Oakland, 455 Hegenberger Road.

### Thursday, August 4 - Sunday, August 7

The 1983 SAN DIEGO COMIC CON at the San Diego Convention and Performing Arts Center. This year's con will focus on a '60s theme and features more guests than you can count! Join us there. Tickets on sale now at COMICS & COMIX.

### Monday, August 15

Meet the creative team on DC's new *Thriller*. Writer BOB FLEMING and artist TREVOR VON EEDEN will be appearing at our Citrus Heights store, 3-5 p.m., and then will cruise on down to our new Solano Mall store in Fairfield for the day's second autograph party, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

### Tuesday, August 16

*Thriller*'s BOB FLEMING and TREVOR VON EEDEN will be on hand again to greet fans and sign autographs at our Palo Alto store, 3-5 p.m. Their final COMICS & COMIX appearance will be later in the day at the newly-revamped Berkeley shop, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

### Sunday, August 21

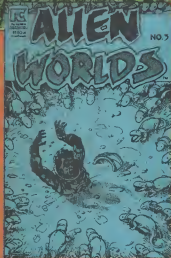
Meet ARN SABA, creator of the delightful *Neil the Horse*. A latter-day Carl Barks, ARN SABA will be appearing at the Berkeley store, 2-4 p.m.

### Saturday, August 27 - Sunday, August 28

CREATION L.A. at the L.A. Airport Hyatt on Century Blvd., featuring guest artists PAUL SMITH, RON WILSON, and DAVE COCKRUM, along with actor MARK LEHARD of *Star Trek* fame. Tentatively scheduled to appear also is ROB BOTTIN, special effects wizard on *The Twilight Zone* and *The Howling*. For more information, call the toll-free Creation hot-line: 800-645-6579.

# PACIFIC COMICS To Lead The

# Continues Way!



A "NEW ERA" in comics is exploding!

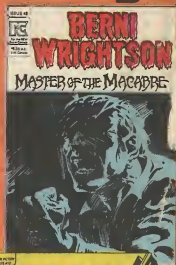
PACIFIC COMICS rocked the industry with a program for creative talent that the Overstreet Price Guide called "... one of the most important developments in comic book history."

This summer we present an awesome array of new releases. Look for these and other "PC" comics at your local comic book store.

You'll be glad you did!



"For the NEW Era in Comics"



DEALERS: CONTACT YOUR DISTRIBUTOR OR PACIFIC COMICS, 8423 PRODUCTION AVENUE, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92121-2278 (619) 566-3290

PACIFIC COMICS IS A DIVISION OF BLUE DOLPHIN ENTERPRISES, INC.



# The Telegraph Wire

Volume 10  
Issue 10



## Telegraph Wire # 10 (1983)

Scanned from cover to cover from the original by jedyanimator.

What you are reading does not exist, except as electronic data.

Support the writers, artists, publishers and booksellers so they can provide you with more entertainment.

**Buy an original!**